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Artist creates bust of J. Smith

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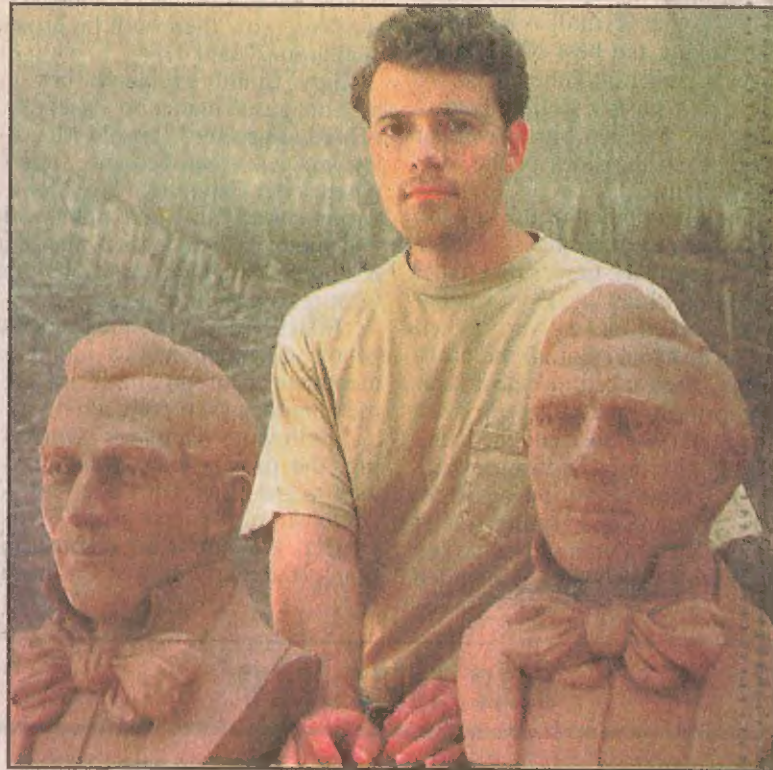
A young artist has created a new bust of Mormon Church founder Joseph Smith that is sure to cause a stir.

The sculpture by Christopher M. Smith, 23, was created using information from computer imaging, historical research and a recently discovered daguerreotype, or an early photographic image, which is awaiting final authentication by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Smith, an art major at Brigham Young University, has taken the spring and summer terms off to work on the model in the Highland studio of his father, well-known artist Gary Ernest Smith.

Chris has worked as an apprentice in his dad's studio, building up clay models on armatures for years. But this is his first effort alone. To have the opportunity to create a sculpture of Joseph Smith at his age is "incredible," said the young artist. "It's like an artist's dream come true."

The elder Smith, who has



Daily Herald Photo/Matthew R. Smith

Sculptor Christopher Smith sits between the busts of Hyrum, left, and Joseph Smith in the studio of Gary Smith, his father, in Highland. The likenesses of the two prominent figures in Mormon history were reconstructed by the artist using, among other items, computer-generated images.

studied LDS Church history extensively and painted scenes of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith at Carthage, Ill., has served as an artistic consultant for the project.

Sculpting the busts of Hyrum and Joseph Smith was another step in a collaborative effort which began with an interest in the martyrs' death masks.

Provo computer graphics expert Shannon Tracy last year

matched points on the death masks with points on photos of the skulls of Joseph and Hyrum and came up with three-dimensional computer images. He then called Gary Smith to help humanize the images, particularly Joseph's.

Then a daguerreotype of Joseph Smith, donated to the RLDS Church in 1962, was made available by Ron Romig.

(See BUST, Page A2)

6-5-90

LeConte Stewart

The death this past week of LeConte Stewart, 99, the Utah artist who more than any other painter of the 20th century celebrated the Mormon landscape, brings to end a long and impressive career. Many Utahns have seen his work without knowing anything about the artist.

Stewart actively painted the landscapes of rural northern Utah until the age of 95, leaving as a legacy more than 7,000 paintings.

As a young man he studied in New York City. When he returned to Utah, he taught at Ogden High School and the University of Utah and served as chairman of the department of art for 18 years.

While serving an LDS mission to Hawaii, 1917-1919, he painted murals and decorative detail for the LDS Temple in Laie. Later, he painted murals for the Mesa, Ariz., and Cardston, Alberta, Canada, temples.

Other of his works appear in the Salt Lake International Airport, the Postmaster General's Office in Washington, D.C., the University of Utah Museum of Fine Arts, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Mu-

seum of Church History and Art, and Southern Utah State College. A previously unexhibited collection of 90 pastel works is currently on display at the Bountiful/Davis Gallery.

He graciously passed on his knowledge to at least two generations of students in private sketching classes and in immensely popular classes at the University of Utah. He inspired numerous artists with his unique vision of art as a celebration of the tradition of which we are a part.

To Stewart, the Mormon pioneer rural landscape of fields and poplar trees represented sanctified space. He once said that his middle name was "Old Barn," and he proved it by expressing his concern whenever an old barn came down and by committing hundreds of old barns to canvas.

Stewart was a visual historian of the rural landscape. He recorded for posterity those visual images that are increasingly scarce and will soon be gone.

All of society is diminished in the loss of a great man, but Utahns can be comforted in the unusual and measurable legacy of this most unusual, humane and dedicated artist.